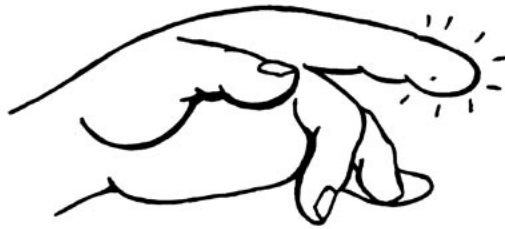


text + work





Pinpoint

Katie Bethune-Leamen + Kate Terry

Pinpoint

Kate Terry's art practice mimics the strategies of hobbyists and do-it-yourself projects. Terry selects cheaply manufactured utilitarian and craft materials in her favourite colours, manipulating them to produce works with a hand-made aesthetic. For *Pinpoint*, Terry has produced her ninth *Thread Installation*, basing its configurations on the particulars and idiosyncrasies of the text + work gallery.

Terry has utilised pretty pink thread and everyday straight pins to create a phenomenological, optical illusion that makes it unclear where the installation begins and ends. Occupying the majority of the space with hundreds of stretched threads, it leaves the gallery neither full nor empty. It is spectacularly non-heroic.

Terry's series of drawings in *Pinpoint* reference the generic drawing styles of instructional illustrations, Dover books, and product packaging. Terry creates line drawings of gesticulating hands that signal, offer helpful guidance, demonstrate hobby-skills, form hand shadows or display craft related injuries. The drawings in *Pinpoint* are titled by lyrics from Bon Jovi's number one hit, *You Give Love a Bad Name*, and illustrate sentiments of lost love.

Also shown are colour coordinated instructional kits for self-installation that Terry produces and markets. The kits are a hybrid of the hobby/craft sensibility of Martha Stewart (America's doyenne of home-making) and Sol LeWitt's instructional wall drawings. Like Ikea products, the kits not only provide instructions for making an installation, but also all the materials required for self-assembly.

Hand-made in small editions, the kits offer an opportunity to complete Terry's work. Their step-by-step instructions explain how, and in which specific spots within a gallery or home the installations, whose elements are contained in the kit, should be implemented, but leave it unclear as to whether the kits should remain an object of a collection or be realized as an installation by the owner.

Pinpoint

Preface to Hand Shadows to be Thrown Upon the Wall: A Series of Novel and Amusing Figures Formed by the Hand

But by what pains [these shadows] were invented can never be revealed; for it is known to my tortured digits alone, and they, luckily for me, are dumb. I calculate that I put my ten fingers through hundreds of various exercises before my "Bird" took wing; my left little finger thrills at the memory of "Grandpapa"; and my thumbs gave in no less than

twenty times before "Boy" was accomplished. Yet now how easy it is to make the "Duck" to quack, the "Donkey" to bray, "Toby" to wag his tail, and the "Rabbit" to munch his unsubstantial meal.



Of course the Shadows are not to be reproduced perfectly, on "one trial only"; but I believe that in each case I have drawn the due position of the fingers with such care, that the most difficult subject may be accomplished after a few minutes; nor need ingenious youth or parental fondness confine their endeavours

to the sketches contained in this book. With a little ingenuity and some patience, new shadows may be produced; and not unfrequently figures appear that one never dreamed of attempting.

Henry Bursill
December 1858

This is the preface to Henry Bursill's edifying little book *Hand Shadows to be Thrown Upon the Wall: A Series of Novel and Amusing Figures Formed by the Hand* (London: Griffith and Farran, 1859) which can be found on the fabulous Gutenberg Project website at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/1/2/9/6/12962/12962-h/12962-h.htm>

An angel's smile is what you sell

When I was a kid, in the schoolyard we would exchange jokes that we somehow knew were intended to have a cachet of prurience, and we would snicker accordingly — having of course no real idea what they meant. One of the most mystifying of these exchanges involved the presentation of the instigator's hands, held vertical and laid flat against each other, fingers spread. These would be interlocked with those of the listener, whose hands were held in the identical manner, but placed horizontally, perpendicular to the first set of hands, with the two sets of hands bisecting each other between their two middle fingers. Both parties would then alternately spread their palms, and peer inside, emitting a resultant squeal of distaste. I have tried this hand configuration out recently and still have no idea what it was supposed to be exactly, though it is vaguely vaginal if you really try to imagine it.

You promise me heaven, then put me through hell

Hands are useful things, and as humans, being provided with an opposable thumb has allowed us to be both rather good, and rather naughty, monkeys. The hyper articulation and multi-digit nature of our hands allows them to be used, formed or combined in almost infinite ways. When conjoined, one of the most common configurations of hands are so-called 'hand shadows'. These are the forms made by a narrator's hands, frequently in the service of telling a story (usually to a child), which with the aid of a darkened room and a direct light source cause the messy spaghetti of fingers to form a more cogent outline on the facing wall. Birds can flutter, doggies bark, giraffes wriggle their ears. Remove the trappings though, and we go back to the fleshy morass of flailing combinations of pinkie and forefinger, index and thumb.

It is to these magical shadow others that Henry Bursill is referring in his preface, reproduced at the beginning of this text, to his 19th century instructional book *Hand Shadows to be Thrown Upon the Wall: A Series of Novel and Amusing Figures Formed by the Hand*. But unlike Henry Bursill's illustrations, which are meant to guide and inspire the reader to reproduce their forms, Kate Terry's hand shadow drawings include only the suggested hand combinations, and no visual indication of the result. A series of four of these drawings are installed in Terry's exhibition at the Gallery at the Arts Institute at Bournemouth, Pinpoint. Carefully rendered in black pen, they are created on sheets of hot pink Mylar - delicate yet strident.

Chains of love got a hold on me

The titles of Terry's hand shadow drawings tell us what shadow forms the configurations might appear to cast were they placed between a wall and a bright light, and yet the hands retain an appearance of piteous contortion regardless of this understanding. But there is more to the name given to each work; they are not just Swan and Billy Goat but I play my part and you play your game: Swan and Your very first kiss was your first kiss goodbye: Billy Goat. At first occluding any further understanding of what the depicted hands and fingers are up to, they turn out to amplify our understanding of the works.

Hair Metal, the class of Metal or Pop music to which the American band Bon Jovi belonged, was traditionally buoyed by elaborate display, with representations of masculinity involving confluences of aspects of codified masculine and feminine presentation not seen since the heyday of Glam Rock. Look back at the appearance or stage acts of groups such as Mötley Crüe or Bon Jovi in their prime, and it can be confusing as to how these men, who look like they may have been taking their style cues from actress Linda Grey on the 1980s American television show Dallas or aerobics king Richard Simmons' work out videos, were considered to be soooo heterosexually hot. Bon Jovi's third album, Slippery When Wet, recently re-mastered and re-released, originally appeared in 1986. Containing such gems as Livin' On a Prayer, and Wanted Dead or Alive, its first single and top ten hit was You Give Love a Bad Name, the song from which the titular extensions to Terry's hand drawings have been drawn.

The lyrics to You Give Love a Bad Name which annotate the hand works in Pinpoint are confusing amplifications that offer the possibility of rounding out an understanding of what these hands are trying to indicate to us. But they leave things open ended and as baffling as a Bon Jovi stage performance might seem to the casual present day observer.

This conflation of two disparate sources — instructional drawings for how to form animal-shaped shadows, and Pop/Metal lyrics — is a frontispiece to an empty story: a karaoke of sorts. They conjoin to form a narrative with no purpose, a fictional confabulation that leads us to no specific place. The guitar-driven paean to lost love has been stripped of its arrangement, musical accompaniment and performance, and the illustrations, already a palimpsest of the activity they denote, have not even been granted their edifying shadows. This accretion of signs taken from divergent cultural arenas indicates a gathering process innate to Kate Terry's art practice, when, magpie-like, she accumulates information and 'bits' that she finds compelling, melding them together into poignant installations and beguiling drawings.

When passion's a prison, you can't break free

A second series of drawings in the Pinpoint exhibition show hands suffering from the labours of their love. Poked, slit, or swollen, they have been inadvertently put in harm's way by their delicate travails. This time Terry has purloined the lyrics from YGLABN that relate quite specifically to the tasks at hand. Entitled No one can save me the damage is done: Pin-prick, No one can save me the damage is done: Paper cut, and No one can save me the damage is done: Blister, this time there is

no question as to why Bon Jovi is being channelled. But again a troubling aspect of the activity in question has been highlighted. The confluence between lyric and image has been extended in the second series of hand drawings, Terry having carefully extracted those lines that make direct reference to wounding and physical mishap; this works to amplify the push/pull of Terry's relation to the cheerful demimonde of craft. And if 'the devil finds work for idle hands', what does it mean when the words to the devil's music (or at least his Muzak) scores their activity? The words become a silent incantation buoying the activity at hand, as if to be muttered under the breath as an intonation to meter activity. The words are a tangential reference, Terry having glommed on to the Bon Jovi lyrics after being smitten by the lines, in turn bending them to her own needs.

You're a loaded gun

Kate Terry's art practice has always been engaged with the most pleasing elements of the world of craft, and the wholesome, winsome supplies of the colloquial construction of the world: balloons; plasticine; pins; pompoms - materials meant to be used in specific contexts, or to be combined to form a greater whole. But when distilled, made precious, adored and lovingly placed, these charmingly pathetic iotas of substance can appear either sad and wholly alone, or completely engaging.

Terry's thread installations have taken the confounding craft of string art (at times exalted with the name 'symmography') and expanded it into colorful articulations of gallery spaces. Traditionally (if one can apply

such a determinant to a practice springing from the burgeoning craft zeitgeist of the 60s and 70s) string art involves the creation of an image on a board using nails and string or fine metal wire. The perimeter of the image is denoted by tiny nails hammered in at measured distances, the volume between them described by lengths of string carefully threaded between each nail, crisscrossed and twisted to form regular striations of pattern. Owls, ships, mushrooms and sunsets are popular subjects. In Terry's hand the demented cult of symmography has been both amplified and reduced. Terry has chosen the flimsiest of materials for her works — using straight pins and sewing thread in tasty colours, but installed them on a grand scale.

In Thread Installation #9, the third element of the Pinpoint exhibition, Kate Terry has visually described the gallery space using one of her lapidary thread installations, carefully articulating both the hard edges and slight idiosyncrasies of the room's construction and design. Hammering in pins, she has then tautly tied lengths of pink thread between the miniature stanchions, creating breathtaking arcs that shouldn't impress, but do — they are just so gosh-darned lovely and precise.

Because they are associated with a recent and nostalgia-ready past, aspects of craft have not only been ensconced in art practices but have also been resurrected for bastardization by fads. Case in point — this season my local H+M store has a symmographic sign that spells out the 'CASH' area on its second floor. Terry's site-specific thread installations continue her dialogue with the materials of craft and the manners

of a do-it-yourself sensibility, but they are also ensnaring countless references to an art historical past. The installations recall the regular lines of constructivist Naum Gabo's filamentary sculptures, sculptor Barbara Hepworth's later stringed works, or the rigorously regular works of Minimalists such as Sol LeWitt or Frank Stella (think of LeWitt's many Line drawings and cube configurations, or Stella's radiating line paintings). However, Terry's thread installations mess things up in a very tidy way, as she has continued preceding investigations of metaphysical space and the sculptural through the use of brazenly craft-based materials, the nature of which she highlights and revels in.

There's nowhere to run

The final elements in Kate Terry's Pinpoint exhibition are her painstakingly assembled Thread Installation Kits. Making obvious the DIY impulse, these are small boxes in which are presented all the items necessary to create one's own thread installation: a spool of thread; matching toned measuring tape; tissue pattern; straight pins; and of course duly illustrated instructions. These kits invite us to take Kate Terry's place as artist, and to replace the gallery setting with whichever spot we choose. This creates the possibility for the materials to relapse back to their origins — plucked from obscurity on store shelves or robbed from sewing baskets, they have been happily ensconced in a gallery — yet, we are invited to purchase (in effect repurchase) these newly presented items and to use them at will. Terry is obliterating the reifying capabilities of the gallery, using it as art showcase, product showroom, and storefront.

French theorist and curator Nicolas Bourriaud writes about the use of pre-existing materials in artworks, describing such activity thusly: “use is an act of micropirating that constitutes postproduction.”

Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, trans. Jeanine Herman (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2000) 18.

He is extrapolating from the ideas of the structuralist Michel de Certeau, who had previously described such processes wherein consumers can interact in unsanctioned ways with that which is sold to them, shown to them, provided to them:

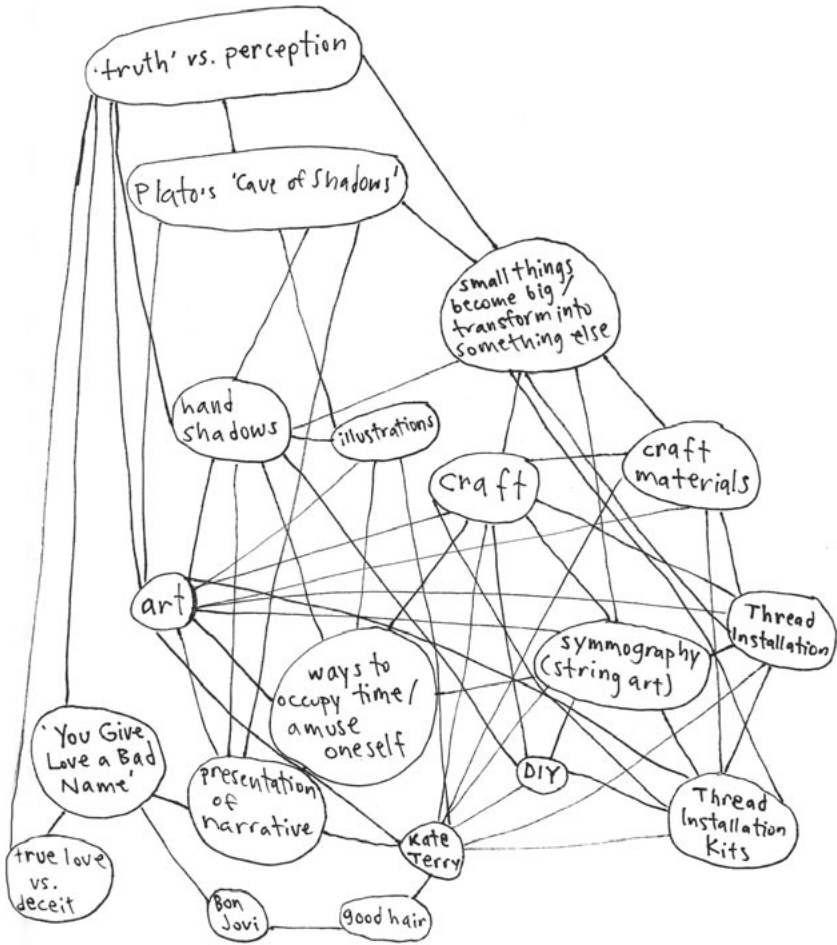
[...they] produce through their signifying practices [...] “indirect” or “errant” trajectories obeying their own logic [...] Although they are composed with the vocabularies of established languages (those of television, newspapers, supermarkets, or museum sequences) and although they remain subordinated to the prescribed syntactical forms [...] the trajectories trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop.

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 30.

No one can save me

In Pinpoint a thread web has been geometrically cast, lyrics called up, pins driven in, and hands made furious use of. Kate Terry has taken studied elements of the formal languages of bygone Minimalism and other artistic precedents, and bred them with elements of pop culture and the materials of craft to produce colourful bastard children who delicately bang their pinheads. These winsome offspring beguilingly create an arena wherein we are drawn into the push and the pull that Terry so strongly feels in relation to her materials and references, amplifying contemporary artistic dialogues.

Katie Bethune-Leamen
Visual Artist & Writer
Toronto, Canada



Katie Bethune-Leamen

Katie Bethune-Leamen is visual artist and writer based in Toronto, Canada. Her recent publications include contributions to the catalogues *Play/Pause/Repeat: Laurel Woodcock* (MacDonald Stewart Art Centre, 2004) and *Michael Waterman: Robochorus* (Artspace, 2005).

Her most recent solo exhibitions were: *Wouldn't It Be (Ice, Ice)*, a combination of videos, drawings, and sculptural works about polar bears, customized cars, ice coolers and Hip-Hop, shown at the Khyber Centre for the Arts in Halifax, Canada in 2004 and *Bite*, a show that features TransArms, silicone buttock implants, fake Louis Vuitton bags, car under-lighting and bits of Hollywood movies at the Paul Petro Gallery in Toronto. Having completed her Master of Fine Arts at the University of Guelph in 2003, she hopes to do a PhD in the near future: because school is cool.

Kate Terry

Kate Terry was born in Canada in 1976. She grew up in Bristol, England and studied sculpture at the Manchester Metropolitan University. In 2000 she was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship that enabled her to return to Canada to undertake a two-year Masters degree at the University of Guelph. Terry has exhibited widely in both England and Canada.

Her recent solo exhibitions have included *Cloud Filling*, at Art System in Toronto, Canada in 2002, and *Diaphanous* at Skol Centre des Arts Actuels, in Montreal, Canada, in 2002. Her work is in a number of private collections and was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 2002.

Since 2002, Terry has lived and worked in London. Her practice encompasses installations, drawings and editioned multiples. In 2003 she began the 'Arm Wrestling For Artists' organisation in association with artist Gary Colclough. In addition to A.W.F.A., Terry and Colclough facilitate art events and collaborate on drawings and installations.









Events Content

open sessions 1.30pm – 5.00pm

Thursday 03 February 2005

The Gallery at The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

1.30pm – 2.30pm	text + work Katie Bethune-Leamen + Kate Terry
2.30pm – 3.00pm	Writer: Katie Bethune - Leamen
3.00pm – 3.30pm	coffee break
3.30pm – 4.00pm	Artist: Kate Terry
4.00pm – 5.00pm	open forum

for further information on the exhibition and event contact:

Violet McClean Gallery Officer

t 01202 363351

e vmcclean@aib.ac.uk



Katie Bethune-Leamen + Kate Terry

Pinpoint

31 January 2005 – 25 February 2005

The Gallery at the Arts Institute at Bournemouth

Opening Hours

9.00am – 8.00pm Monday – Thursday (Term Time)

9.00am – 4.00pm Friday

9.00am – 1.00pm Saturday (Term Time)

Closed Bank Holidays

text + work

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